



**Homeland
Security**

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News Release

Homeland Security takes first step to seal massive cross border tunnel

SAN DIEGO – The Department of Homeland Security took the first step today to begin sealing the nearly half-mile long cross-border tunnel discovered three months ago linking warehouses in Tijuana, Mexico, and Otay Mesa, California.

Agents with U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and U.S. Customs and Border Protection Border Patrol (CBP Border Patrol) stood by as a private contractor hired by the Department excavated a small section of the tunnel and poured in a cement plug, closing the passageway where it crosses the international border. The next step is the larger task of filling in the entire tunnel on the United States side with concrete.

Today's action is the latest development in a case that captured national and international media attention. The tunnel was first discovered in late January as a result of a long-term, multi-agency investigation by the San Diego Tunnel Task Force, made up of agents from ICE, CBP Border Patrol, and the Drug Enforcement Administration. The mineshaft-like passageway is one of the largest and most sophisticated tunnels ever uncovered along the U.S.-Mexico border.

ICE's investigation into the cross-border tunnel continues. So far, one suspect has been arrested in the case. Carlos Eugenio Cardenas-Calvillo, 44, who worked at the Otay Mesa warehouse that concealed the tunnel's U.S. entrance, is charged with conspiracy to import a controlled substance.

"This tunnel not only poses a security threat, it is also a safety hazard, which is why we are taking steps to seal it permanently," said Miguel Unzueta, special agent in charge of the ICE office of investigations in San Diego. "But while the tunnel is being closed, I want to emphasize that our investigation is still very much open and ongoing."

The Tunnel Task Force is using an array of high-tech equipment and intelligence information to pinpoint the location of underground passageways along the border in the region. Since 9/11, federal authorities have discovered more than 20 cross-border tunnels along the U.S.-Mexico border in California and Arizona.

Editor's Note: Footage of the contractors preparing to seal the tunnel shot by CBP Border Patrol agents is available under a prior arrangement with KNSD-TV. To obtain a copy, contact the news desk at 619 578-0201.